He has now cleared bush and planted gardens all round and claims, by right of usage, a much larger area than was originally allocated to him. The establishment of freehold title must reinforce dispersal, so it is significant that in August 1964 seventeen Yega cocoa-block holders were among the first people in New Guinea to apply for freehold title. The parish elders did not oppose these applications.

Yega expectations in cocoa plantings as a source of cash income have not been fulfilled. The trees began to bear in mid-1964, at a time when, unfortunately, the world market was depressed. Growers received only three cents per pound for wet beans from a European-managed fermentary near Popondetta; by mid-1965 the price had fallen even lower, to two cents per pound. The discouraging effect of such prices was reflected in the low production of cocoa during the latter half of 1966, when forty-eight growers produced only 1,866 pounds of wet beans valued at $74.64, an average of under $2 per head. By January 1967, the well-cared for plantations of 1964 looked overgrown and neglected and it was obvious that apathy had replaced the early enthusiasm.

The Yega cocoa-growing scheme outlined above well illustrates the conflicting traditional and modern socio-economic attitudes commonly found in New Guinea today. Traditional aspects are:

a) The use of communal labour to clear the rain forest and the subdivision of the area among those who helped.

b) The absence of any documentary record of the transference of cultivation rights to individuals.

c) The organization of group labour for certain tasks—individual right-holders to cocoa blocks were assisted by their kin in tasks such as cutting grass and opening the cocoa pods—and the subsequent obligation on the right-holder to repay such work by sharing his profits.

d) Personal control by each individual of the economic trees which he planted on his block.

Aspects which have little precedent in traditional custom but result rather from the acceptance of new principles are:

a) The systematic layout of blocks.

[P.16-A]